

Frequently Asked Questions

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What building codes are enforced by the City of Bulverde?

Generally speaking, the 2015 International Residential Code and Appendix G; the 2015 International Building Code; the 2015 Fire Code; and the 2014 National Electric Code are enforced by the City of Bulverde. For more detail, please refer to the “Ordinances” section of the City’s website: www.bulverdetx.gov Chapter 3, “Building Regulations” contains the building code information.

2. Do I need a Building Permit?

Yes, you do need a building permit for many construction or repair activities. However, there are some exceptions where a permit is **not** required. The following items do **not** require a permit:

- a. Roof repair or replacement, siding repair or replacement, and window replacement.
- b. Fences six (6) feet or less in height
- c. Retaining walls four (4) feet or less in height that are not supporting a surcharge or located at the bottom or top of a slope
- d. Water tanks with a capacity of 5,000 gallons or less, the ratio of the height of the tank and its diameter is not greater than 2:1, and the tank is supported directly by the ground
- e. Swing sets and other noncommercial playground equipment
- f. Decks, patios, porches that are constructed “at-grade” (level with the ground).
- g. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, installing cabinets, installing counter tops, installing drywall, and other finish or cosmetic work

General interior remodeling work does not require a permit, **unless work is being performed on load bearing walls or other structural components.**

NOTE: A permit IS required for any structural component alteration or modifications to the utility systems (electrical, plumbing, HVAC) of the structure.

- h. Installation of prefabricated swimming pools with depths less than 24 inches
- i. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the wall and do not require additional support
- j. Replacement of light fixtures, electrical appliances, and other minor electrical repair work.

NOTE: Gas powered appliance install, repair, or replacement DOES require a permit.

- k. Repairs or replacement of electrical HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning) parts and equipment
- l. Portable fuel cell appliances not connected to a fixed piping system or interconnected to a power grid (e.g., a generator; a hydrogen fuel cell)

- m. Steam, hot, or chilled fluid piping repair or installation within any heating or cooling equipment
- n. Clearing of clogs, repairing of leaks in pipes, valves, or fixtures, provided such repairs do not require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures

Small, detached structures (e.g., sheds)

Single story, detached structures—for example, a storage shed—with a footprint less than 200 square feet **DOES** require a permit for the construction of the structure, **HOWEVER**, there is **no permit fee**.

When in doubt, please contact City Hall at (830) 438-3612 BEFORE you begin your project. We will be happy to review the proposed project to determine whether or not a permit is required.

3. Can I request that any of the above exempted items be inspected?

Yes, you will need to fill out a building permit application, and inspection fees will apply.

4. Do I need a permit to install or repair a driveway?

You might. Any time driveway work involves the “approach” (meaning the section of driveway that is in contact with the street), a permit is required. It is best practice to contact the City to determine the need for a permit based on the work that is planned.

5. Do utility companies need to have a permit to repair or install equipment in the area?

No. If a utility company is working on (i.e., repairing or installing) equipment or infrastructure that belongs to that utility company, they do not need to have a permit issued by the City.

6. How long is a permit valid?

Building permits are valid for 180 calendar days from the date of issuance. Time extensions may be granted in accordance with the provisions contained in the 2015 International Residential Code and International Building Code. As long as at least one inspection is performed (demonstrating progress being made on the project) every 180 days, the permit will remain active.

7. What are the permit fees?

Building permit fees depend on the amount and type of work being performed. Because of the variability involved, it is not easy question to give a “blanket” answer to. For residential construction, the permit fees cover the plan review and building inspections. For commercial construction, there is a separate plan review fee. This plan review fee is calculated by multiplying the permit fee by 0.65. The permit fee schedule can be found in Chapter 3, “Building Regulations” of the “Ordinances” section of the City’s website. When you submit a building permit application to the City, we will review the work being performed, calculate the appropriate fees, and then inform the applicant of the fees.

8. How long does it take to get a permit?

Some permits can be approved within two (2) business days. Larger projects will take longer to approve. For larger, or more complex projects, permit approval or application comments will be sent within twelve (12) business days from receipt of the application. For new commercial building permits, the approval time may be extended beyond twelve (12) business days due to the exterior architecture requiring approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

9. What is the inspection schedule?

The City performs some inspections with City Staff and with our building permit contractor, Bureau Veritas. Inspections are performed each business day. You must contact City Hall and request a building inspection prior to 4:00 PM the business day BEFORE you want the inspection. This prior notice allows us to schedule City Staff and/or the contractor appropriately.

10. Can I act as my own contractor?

Yes, you may act as your own general contractor under the following conditions:

- a. You are performing work on your homestead. *Homestead* is defined as the single family residence that you own and live in. You must show proof of liability insurance on the property and sign a “statement of responsibility.”
- b. If you are building a new home, you must have liability insurance on the property/project and you must sign an affidavit stating that you will live in the home or at least one year before you sell it. You will also need to register as a General Contractor with the City.

11. If I build a home and decide to sell it, or if I purchase a new built home, are there any warranties?

Yes, the State of Texas mandates the following warranties for residential construction and residential improvements:

- a. One year for workmanship and materials.
- b. Two years for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems.
- c. Ten years for major structural components of the home.
- d. Ten years for “warranty of habitability.”

12. Can I put an “accessory structure” on a vacant lot?

No. An accessory structure is building containing a supplementary, or accessory, use to the main zoning classification for the property. Examples include a garage and storage shed. The main use (like a home) must first exist on the lot before an accessory use can be placed there.

13. Can I clear a lot without a permit?

Yes, but you are limited as to what you can clear and do. You can clear all Cedars, Chinaberry, Hackberry, and Mesquite trees and brush from the lot. You may also do some minor grading on the lot as long as the grading operations do not affect trees other than the species mentioned above. All other activities, such as other tree species removal and prepping for a foundation require permits.

14. Do I need a Certificate of Occupancy?

Yes and No. Certificates of Occupancy are required for all commercial uses before the space is occupied. The City of Bulverde does not require Certificates of Occupancy for residential construction. However, residential construction is still required to have and pass a “final inspection” before being permanently occupied.